

## Hope for the Discouraged and Depressed, Part 14 - Romans 8:38-39 – June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012

- Today's teaching will bring us to the end of Romans chapter eight, as part 14 of a series I've titled; "Hope for the Discouraged and Depressed."
- To say that these two verses saved the best for the last would be an understatement as I'm sure you'll see why once we start to unpack the text.
- I have to confess that, though I've really been looking forward to these two verses, coming to the end of this chapter is going to be bittersweet.

Charles Spurgeon – The Apostle began with no condemnation and he ends with no separation filling up the space between with priceless covenant blessings. No chapter in the Bible is more crowded with sublime and consoling teaching. Lord, grant us to know and enjoy all the inestimable privileges, which it reveals.

- This quote from Spurgeon reveals he was well aware of a distinction we would all do well to understand as it relates to knowing and enjoying.
- In other words, just because we know the truth in the pages of Holy Writ, doesn't mean that we will enjoy the inestimable privileges of that truth.
- Such is the case with that which is set on the table before us. But, I think we'd be grossly remiss were we not to first partake of this appetizer.

William Newell in his commentary on Romans captures the heart of this distinction this way; "Before we quote the last two verses of this triumphant [expression], let us lay to heart this word persuaded [convinced], for it is the key to Paul's triumph as he goes shouting up these mountain heights of Christian faith. "Persuaded" is a heart word. [There's a] difference between knowing a truth and being heart-persuaded of it, ...To know a Bible truth, you have only to read it: to be "persuaded of it in the Lord Jesus" involves the fact, first, that the truth in question touches your own personal safety before God; and, second, that your heart has so been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and your will so won over—persuaded—that *confidence*, heart-satisfied *persuasion*, results.

- It's at this place I wish to commence with exposition of, as Newell puts it, "the truth that touches our heart as it's enlightened by the Holy Spirit."
- Perhaps better said, if we will but give the Holy Spirit permission to have unfettered access to our hearts and minds, this can be real in our lives.
- Even now all of us can ask the Lord to build the bridge between the knowledge, which is the information, to the wisdom, which is the application.

- Having said that, and even prayed that, we are now ready to take and tackle this tremendous list that the Apostle Paul writes in verses 38-39.
- I counted a total of 10 however the last one leaves it open to anything and everything else in all creation, which pretty much covers everything.
- In order for us to download all these files, so to speak, I think it's incumbent upon me to sort of take a micro, as opposed to a macro approach.

- By that I mean, instead of doing a teaching verse by verse, I'm sensing that we should study it word for word, but relax, it won't take that long!
- The reason for doing this, this way is that there's a spilling over of a paradox from the previous verses, in that Paul's list is riddled with contrasts.
- It's important to note how that he contrasts death with life, angels with demons, the present with the future, and then finally, height with depth.

- This begs the question of why he lists them in this fashion. I would suggest both extremes have the propensity to separate me from God's love.
- Let me explain, sometimes, it's not the adversity, but the prosperity that creates the proclivity to distance me from the Lord and His love for me.
- I find it interesting that it's not chiefly my love for Him it's His love for me. The reason I point this out is because those things cannot love me.

- Be that as it may, it does have the potential to cause me to forget the Lord, and in so doing, distance me or separate me from the love of God.
- I am keenly aware that one might argue how it is, that Paul could be so emphatic, and dogmatic, in his unflinching convincing to the contrary.
- The reason is that Paul is not talking about our love for God; rather he's on the other side of the table talking about God's love for us instead.

- While everything on Paul's list could separate us from our love for the Lord, there's not one thing that can separate us from God's love for us.
- It is so vital that we both know and understand this for a number of reasons not the least of which is what God's love for us will bring forth to us.
- If the truth be known and understood, this is a paramount distinction that has enormous and glorious implications and ramifications for our lives.

- 1 John 4:19 tells us why and what that is; "We love Him because He first loved us." This is the bottom line in terms of God's love for us.
- This is how it is that we are able to find hope and encouragement in this life, and it just so happens to be the first on Paul's top ten list.
- Please indulge me for the remainder of our time together in God's Word as I quickly go through each one of them in order of Paul's list.

- 1. Death** - For those who are born again of the Spirit of God have no fear of death. Why? Because death won't separate us it will unite us.
- 2. Life** - Though we might think God is angry with us; even those difficulties in life cannot separate us from the love that God has for us.

William Newell - But life! Ah, life is so much more difficult than death!—life with its burdens, its bitternesses, its disappointments, its uncertainties; often with its physical miseries,—as Job said, "My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than these my bones." But just as death cannot separate us from this unchangeable love of God in Christ, neither can any circumstances of life do it!

- 3. Angels** - I'm of the belief that this speaks to a hyper-spiritual and supernatural "experience centered" gospel that can lead one astray.

**Galatians 1:8 NIV** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

- 4. Demons** - This clearly speaks of the demonic realm with even its principalities and powers of darkness unable to separate us from God.
- 5. The Present** - To me, this seemingly addresses those present set of circumstances in the life of a believer, as perilous as they may be.
- 6. The Future** - This goes to the opposite end of the spectrum and instead of dealing with present circumstances, it's about future worries.
- 7. Powers** - This one is most interesting because it carries with it the idea of those mystical or magical powers in the realm of superstition.

William Newell – "...it is a sad fact that many dear saints are troubled by these things. They are *afraid*—of Friday the thirteenth, of passing under a ladder, of seeing a black cat, of breaking a mirror! ...People say to me, "Do you believe there is anything in spiritism?" I say, "I certainly do—the devil's in it!" But none of these "powers" can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. There is no such thing as "luck." Let us cease to dishonor God by mentioning it! ...Let us be "persuaded" of the love which God, without cause in us, has unchangeable toward us, in Christ Jesus our Lord. No matter how real, insidious, terrifying these demon powers may be, we are safe in Christ!

- 8. Height** - The thought is that, with the unfathomable heights and vastness of the universe, we may think that God is not mindful of us.
- 9. Depth** - As the polar opposite of the aforementioned height it echoes the words of Jesus Himself that the gates of hell will never prevail.
- 10. Anything else in creation** – Simply put, this settles the matter of anything and everything that we could conjure up in all of creation.

Charles Spurgeon, in writing about how the great men and women of God in the Bible viewed and spoke of God's love said; "They did not speak of Christ's love as though it were a myth to be respected, a tradition to be revered; they viewed it as a blessed reality, and they cast their whole confidence upon it, being persuaded that it would bear them up as upon eagles' wings, and carry them all their days; resting assured that it would be to them a foundation of rock, against which the waves might beat, and the winds blow, but their soul's habitation would stand securely if founded upon it."

- I'll bring today's sermon in for a close by sharing with you from a most fascinating book that I have in my study titled; "101 Hymn Stories."
- You'll forgive me if I wax a little bit sentimental, but there's this one hymn, that I would venture to say, everyone here knows all too well.
- I'm speaking of the hymn, known, as "Jesus Loves Me," that without a doubt has influenced more children for Christ than any other hymn.

The words to Jesus Loves Me were penned by Anna B. Warner, who, with her sister Susan, originally wrote it as part one of a best selling novel in that day. Not only were they highly educated they were deeply devoted young ladies who lived all their lives along the Hudson River in New York. Their home was near the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and for a number of years these two sisters conducted Sunday School classes for the young cadets. Their home was willed to the Academy and made into a national shrine. Both sisters were buried with military honors in recognition of their spiritual contributions to the lives of the young military officers. After the death of their widower father, a well-known New York lawyer, who had lost most of his fortune in the 1837 depression, the Warner sisters were left with a meager income and of necessity turned to serious literary writing. Both Anna and Susan Warner's writings are marked by, what some judge to be, "undistinguished religious sentimentality." But those who are critical of the text's simplicity may do well to remember what the great theologian Karl Barth once said when asked about his most profound theological discovery: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

Kenneth W. Osbeck "101 Hymn Stories" pp. 135, 136

### JESUS LOVES ME THIS I KNOW

Jesus loves me! This I know,  
For the Bible tells me so;  
Little ones to Him belong;  
They are weak, but He is strong.

Refrain:

Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! This I know,  
As He loved so long ago,  
Taking children on His knee,  
Saying, "Let them come to Me." [Refrain]

Jesus loves me still today,  
Walking with me on my way,  
Wanting as a friend to give  
Light and love to all who live. [Refrain]

Jesus loves me! He who died  
Heaven's gate to open wide;  
He will wash away my sin,  
Let His little child come in. [Refrain]

Jesus loves me! He will stay  
Close beside me all the way;  
Thou hast bled and died for me,  
I will henceforth live for Thee. [Refrain]